Assassination Death Toll Now Stands at 24

William H. (Joe) Cooper is the 24th assassination figure to die since John Kennedy was murdered in Dallas on Nov. 22, 1963.

And the incredible circumstances surrounding many of those deaths has kept alive the possibility that a conspiracy was responsible for the death of John Kennedy and the succession of mysterious murders that have followed.

Among those key assassination figures who have died under mysterious circumstances are the following:

• Newspaper reporters Bill Hunter and Jim Koethe were the only journalists to get inside the apartment of Jack Ruby, the man who gunned down Lee Harvey Oswald, Kennedy's accused assassin.

Shortly after Ruby shot Oswald, they were allowed inside the apartment by George Senator, Ruby's roommate. The reporters spent several hours going through Ruby's personal effects. Within 10 months, both were killed.

Hunter, of the Long Beach Press Telegram, was seated in a chair at the Long Beach police station when he was shot. An officer explained that his pistol accidentally discharged.

Koethe was killed by a karate chop to the throat just six months later. His murderer was never found.

• Little Lynn (real name Karen Bennett Carlin) was the star stripper at Ruby's Carousel Club. She was found shot to death in a Houston hotel.

• Marilyn Moon (Marilyn Magyar), another Ruby stripper, was found dead in her Omaha, Neb. home two years after the assassination. She had been shot seven times.

• Rose Cherami, another Ruby stripper, was struck and killed by a hit-and-run car in Big Sandy, Tex.

• Two other Ruby women – Nancy Rich and Betty McDonald – died violent and mysterious deaths.

• William Wahley, the taxi driver who picked up Oswald and took him to his apartment minutes after Kennedy was shot, became the first cab driver in almost 40 years to die in a Dallas auto accident.

• Earlene Roberts, Oswald's landlady, testified that shortly after the assassination, a police car pulled up in front of her rooming house. The driver honked twice, waited a few minutes, then drove away. Oswald remained hidden in his room until the car left. She also knew Ruby before the assassination. Mrs. Roberts' death was attributed to natural causes.

• Thomas (Hank) Killam's wife worked for Ruby and his best friend lived in the same four-unit rooming house with Oswald. Killam was found dead on a Pensacola, Fla. sidewalk in the early morning hours of March 17, 1964. Police concluded that he "accidentally" fell through a plate glass window and slit his own throat.

• Harold Russell, who witnessed the shooting of Patrolman J.D. Tippit when the officer attempted to arrest Oswald, was beaten to death by a policeman wielding a revolver on July 23, 1965 in Sulphur, Okla.